General Services Administration
National Archives and Records Service
Washington, DC 20408

September 23, 1980

Mr. Edgar F. Tatro
51 Edgemont Road
Braintree, MA 02184

Dear Mr. Tatro:

Thank you for your letter of July 12, 1980, concerning the assassination of President Kennedy. Your letter was referred to the National Archives by the Department of Army.

Enclosed are copies of the only pages relating to the origin of the ammunition used in the assassination that we have been able to locate in the name and subject files of the Warren Commission. Also enclosed is a bill for $3.00, our minimum charge for mail orders. Please follow the instructions on the bill. We have found no other information in the records of the Commission in response to your questions. We have referred a copy of your letter to our Legislative and Natural Resources Branch in regard to your inquiry about the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Sincerely,

CLARENCE F. LYONS, JR.
Chief
Judicial and Fiscal Branch
Civil Archives Division

Enclosures

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DL 100-10461

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It is to be noted investigation has established the 6.5 M/M Mannlicher-Carcano cartridge cases found in the Texas School Book Depository building, Dallas, Texas, were manufactured by Western Cartridge Company, East Alton, Illinois. The Western Cartridge Company has advised it manufactured four million rounds of this ammunition in 1954.

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The following investigation was conducted by SA ALFRED D. NEELEY at Dallas, Texas, on March 23, 1964:

Mr. R. W. BOTTS, District Manager, Winchester-Western Division, Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation, Braniff Building, advised that the Western Cartridge Company, a division of Olin Industries, East Alton, Illinois, manufactured a quantity of 6.5 M/M Mannlicher-Carcano ammunition for the Italian Government during World War II. At the end of the war, the Italian Carcano rifle and no telling how much of this type ammunition were sold to the United States gun brokers and dealers and subsequently was distributed by direct sales to wholesalers, retailers, and individual purchasers.

Mr. BOTTS stated there was no known complete list of places of business in Dallas which might have handled this type ammunition. He advised that he could only suggest that places normally or possibly handling this ammunition would be set forth in the Classified Section of the telephone directory under guns, hardware companies, pawn shops, department stores, sporting goods stores, discount stores, and Army and Navy surplus stores. He stated that such list would not be all inclusive, as it was possible that a person, such as a "reloader," might have purchased some of this ammunition as it could be reloaded in the United States, whereas, the 6.5 Italian Carcano ammunition could not be reloaded in the United States.

In an effort to locate a source of supply of the 6.5 M/M Mannlicher-Carcano, Western Cartridge Company, ammunition where LEE HARVEY OSWALD purchased ammunition for his Carcano rifle, a telephone canvass was made of all places of business in the Dallas and Irving area listed in the current Dallas - Irving Classified Section of the telephone directories under listings ammunition, guns, hardware stores, pawn shops, department stores, discount stores, sporting goods stores, and Army and Navy surplus stores. This telephone contact was made with each such place located and each person contacted was questioned as to whether he had ever handled the 6.5 M/M Mannlicher-Carcano, Western Cartridge Company, ammunition and if he knew of any source handling this type ammunition.

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Only the two following listed places were located as a result of this telephone canvass:

JOHN THOMAS MASEN, Owner, Masen's Gun Shop, 7402 Harry Hines Boulevard, Dallas;

JOHN H. BRINEGAR, Owner, The Gun Shop, 11448 Harry Hines Boulevard, Dallas.

Separate interviews with JOHN T. MASEN and JOHN H. BRINEGAR are being set forth hereinafter.

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On January 7, 1964, Mr. JOHN W. SIPES, Deputy Director, Office of Munitions Control (MC), Department of State, and Mr. JOHN F. DEPENBROCK, Chief, Arms Traffic Division, MC, furnished the following information to Special Agent (SA) KENNETH J. HASER:

"An informant of unconfirmed reliability who is an officer in a surplus small arms company, advised the Office of Munitions Control on December 18, 1963, that he was in possession of firm evidence that the ammunition used to assassinate President KENNEDY was imported into the United States in contravention of Section 414(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended.

"The informant stated that the ammunition had been positively identified as Winchester Western 6.5 mm. (Italian); that the ammunition was manufactured by Winchester in 1951-2; and that it was furnished to the Government of Greece under the Greek Aid Program in 1952 or 1953. Further, the informant stated that two lots of this ammunition were exported from Greece to Canada by a Greek national named FONTINELLIS who was acting as an agent for International Firearms, Montreal, Canada. He advised that Mr. SUCHER is the principal stockholder in International Firearms Company. The informant continued that one of the two lots of the subject ammunition was sent from Greece to Canada after February 1, 1962. The informant alleges that this ammunition was imported into the United States in contravention to the section of the law that restricts the return to the United States for resale any ammunition of United States manufacture furnished to foreign governments by the United States under any foreign assistance program. He further alleges that there was no other ammunition of this type available in the United States, as it was manufactured specifically for the Greek Government under the Greek Aid Program. The informant has reason to believe that the ammunition was imported from Canada under the provision of the International Traffic in Arms regulations which exempts imports from Canada where the ammunition has come from a third country and has been in Canada more than one year. (22 CFR 123.23c)

"The informant believes that the ammunition was consigned to Century Arms in St. Albans, Vermont, based on his knowledge that Mr. SUCHER, the principal stockholder of International Firearms, is a brother-in-law of Mr. MANNEY WIGGINSBURG (phonetic), who operated Century Arms. Accordingly, the informant concludes that S. KLEIN could only have gotten the ammunition from Century Arms, who in turn obtained it from International Firearms."

Mr. SIPES noted that his informant's "angle" on this is that for years the small arms dealers have been trying to get something done about trans-shipment of ammunition via Canada to get around regulations, which adversely affects their business. SIPES explained that we have an arrangement with Canada allowing importation of various armament items, providing that the items have been in Canada at least one year. This latter condition seeks to eliminate in part shipments to Canada first which are intended for the United States.

Mr. SIPES also explained that a 1958 amendment to the Mutual Security Act of 1954 prohibits the reimportation of ammunition into the United States if this ammunition was originally sent to another country under the terms of any United States aid program, a device to protect our own industry to some extent. If the ammunition used in the assassination of President KENNEDY was part of any United States aid program shipment to Greece, it could not legally have been brought into the United States for resale except for personal use by a collector or for military use, notwithstanding the United States - Canada agreement.

Mr. SIPES stated that the Department of State is not taking any action with regard to investigating this allegation about the ammunition. He advised that State is definitely interested in doing whatever can be done to tighten up controls at the Canadian border with regard to ammunition importation and will probably have conversations with other interested government agencies in this connection. He stated that the Office of Munitions Control would be interested in receiving any information pertinent to this which the Bureau (FBI) might develop with regard to the information furnished by the informant.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to File No.

550 Jefferson West II
535 West Jefferson Street
Springfield, Illinois 62702

September 19, 1980

Mr. Edgar F. Tatro
51 Edgemont Road
Braintree, Massachusetts 02184

Dear Mr. Tatro:

Your letter dated August 26, 1980, concerning the investigation involving the assassination of President John F. Kennedy was received at this office on September 3, 1980.

A search of the general indices to the Springfield Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) central record system reveals one file identifiable with the investigation involving the "assassination of President John F. Kennedy."

A search of this file, which consists of 108 serials, reveals only four serials which are identifiable with your request pertaining to Winchester-Western ammunition.

Copies of these four documents are being sent to FBI Headquarters, Washington, D.C., for processing and release. FBI Headquarters will communicate with you directly on this matter if they have not already done so.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Davenport

Robert B. Davenport
Special Agent in Charge